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Remembering 'The Night of Broken Glass'

10.30.2009 | Culture and Society University faculty, staff and students as well as the public are invited to meet at **9 p.m. Monday, Nov. 9, at Humanities Plaza** for a ceremony to commemorate Kristallnacht — the "Night of Broken Glass."

On Nov. 9, 1938, the Nazis unleashed a wave of pogroms — state-sanctioned, anti-Jewish riots — against Germany's Jews. The night came to be known as Kristallnacht, translated "Night of Broken Glass," as a reference to the untold number of broken windows of synagogues, Jewish-owned stores, community centers and homes that carpeted German streets.

Encouraged by the Nazi regime, the rioters burned or destroyed 267 synagogues, vandalized or looted 7,500 Jewish businesses and killed at least 91 Jewish people. For the first time, Jews were arrested on a massive scale and transported to Nazi concentration camps.

The riots were a turning point in history, as they marked an intensification of Nazi anti-Jewish policy that would culminate in the Holocaust—the systematic, state-sponsored murder of Jews.

"We live in a world where ethnic and racial violence still exists, in places like Darfur, for example," said sociology professor Sister Laura Leming, F.M.I. "As a Catholic university that celebrates diversity and community and commemorates the martyrdom of Marianist priest Jakob Gapp in the Holocaust, it is fitting for us to stand together and say 'never again.'"

In case of heavy rain, the vigil will be held in the Immaculate Conception Chapel.

Sponsors of the event include the department of sociology, anthropology and social work, the criminal justice studies program, Campus Ministry, the Center for Social Concern, the office of diversity and inclusion and the University Professor of Faith and Culture.

For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or fullam@udayton.edu.